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Christians Are Proactive: Part I

Bible study on behavior.

A proactive person acts in advance to deal with an expected difficulty (American Heritage Dictionary).

Proactive vs. Reactive

A proactive choice is based on values and principles. But a reactive person makes choices primarily based upon desires, feelings, circumstances, conditions, and their environment.

This is a generalization, but I hope it helps us understand the major difference between proactive versus reactive behavior. Actually, proactive choices can be made according to our feelings as long as the choice is compatible with our values; but when we reactively make decisions based only on feelings we often sacrifice our values because of our feelings.

Christians Must Prepare -- Be Proactive

Although the word proactive doesn't appear in the Bible, Christians are commanded to be prepared, which requires proactive behavior.

Peter says, "prepare your minds for action. . . ." ([1 Pet. 1:13](#)). We must prepare our minds, to act the way God commands in a given situation. Therefore, we must be proactive -- we must act in advance, to deal with whatever situation we find ourselves.

Christians Must Be Ready -- Be Proactive

Prepared Christians are ready to act. Therefore, they are proactive.

Jesus tells us we must be ready for His return. He says, "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect" ([Lk. 13:40](#)).

Paul tells us to be ready for every good deed. He says, "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed" ([Tit. 3:1](#)).

And Peter tells us to be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks about our hope. He says, "but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you. . . ." ([1 Pet. 3:15](#)).

We must be proactive to be prepared, and be ready!

Example: Queen Esther

Was Proactive Queen Esther, a Jew who was married to King Xerxes, had to make a profound choice.

As recorded in the book bearing her name, Haman issued a decree that would annihilate the Jews on a certain day. Mordecai sent word to Esther with a copy of the decree, and explained that she had to talk to the king and prevent the slaughter. At first, Esther reacted negatively, thinking the king would kill her when she went before him without being summoned. But Mordecai convinced her that she had an obligation toward God to do everything she could to save the Jews.

After she was convinced to try and save the Jews, she said, "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish" ([Es. 4:16](#))!

Notice that Esther's original behavior was reactive, and she made an incorrect decision based on fear. But later, when she took a proactive approach, she made a correct decision. As a result, Israel was saved.

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Our Attitude is Similar to Esther's

Esther decided to do the right thing, even if it cost her life.

Like Esther, our attitude is to do the right thing, even if it costs our life.

Jesus says, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. . . . So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" ([Lk. 14:26](#)- 27, 33).

We must set aside our sinful affections to follow Jesus. We must bear our cross, never allowing ourselves to react with sinful passions and emotion. We must make proactive decisions to do the right thing, and be ready to face whatever comes our way.

We Always Have a Choice

We always have a choice regarding sin.

Paul says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" ([1 Cor. 10:13](#)).

Since we always have a choice whether to sin or obey God, we must proactively obey God rather than reactively give into temptation.

Think Rather Than React

When we are tempted, we must engage our minds and think through the temptation, so we see the way of escape and obey God.

We seek the things above, setting our minds on the things above, considering the members of our earthly body as dead ([Col. 3:1-5](#)). We proactively obey God based on His word, and never react based on feelings alone.

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